

WSU News

January 22, 2021

FAA awards Wichita State \$684K to study unmanned aerial systems

By Strategic Communications

Wichita State University will receive \$684,000 from the [Federal Aviation Administration \(FAA\)](#) for three programs aimed at increasing safety measures for the use of unmanned aerial systems (UAS).

The awards are for fiscal year 2021 and include \$464,000 to lead Small UAS (sUAS) Mid-Air Collision (MAC) Likelihood studies; \$120,000 to support the Validation of Visual Operation Standards for sUAS; and \$100,000 to support High-Bypass UAS Engine Ingestion Tests. They will be conducted through the [National Institute for Aviation Research](#).

Wichita State is part of the FAA's [Air Transportation Center of Excellence for Unmanned Aircraft Systems \(UAS\)](#), also known as the [Alliance for System Safety of UAS through Research Excellence \(ASSURE\)](#).

In total, the FAA awarded \$5.8 million in research, education and training grants to universities engaged with ASSURE, including Embry Riddle Aeronautical University, Kansas State University, New Mexico State University, North Carolina State University, Oregon State University, Ohio State University, University of Alabama, University of Alaska, University of Kansas and University of North Dakota.

"These universities are making great strides in advancing the Department's efforts to integrate UAS safely and efficiently into our Nation's airspace system, ultimately delivering new transportation solutions and economic benefits for the American people," said acting U.S. Secretary of Transportation Steven G. Bradbury.

The FAA's Center of Excellence for UAS is advancing the administration's transportation and economic goals that air travel provides to the nation. The [Center of Excellence UAS universities](#) received a total of \$5,822,990 to advance specific goals and projects.

"These universities are making great strides in advancing our efforts to safely and efficiently integrate UAS into our nation's airspace system," said FAA Administrator Steve Dickson. "Each grant is designed to

explore the questions that will lead to greater UAS and unmanned air carrier integration, which will ultimately deliver new transportation solutions and economic benefits for the American people.”

More than 1.7 million recreational and commercial drones are in the active UAS fleet. That number is expected to grow to as high as 2.31 million by 2024. The ASSURE grants are aimed at continuing and enhancing the safe and successful integration of drones into the nation’s airspace system (NAS).

The FAA has established 13 Centers of Excellence in critical topic areas focusing on unmanned aircraft systems; alternative jet fuels and environment; general aviation safety; commercial space transportation; airliner cabin environment and intermodal transportation research; aircraft noise and aviation emissions mitigation; advanced materials; general aviation research; airworthiness assurance; operations research; airport pavement and technology; computational modeling of aircraft structures; and technical training and human performance.